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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/671,803	09/29/2003	Masahiro Hasebe	D-1527	9917

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HAUPTMAN KANESAKA BERNER PATENT AGENTS
SUITE 300, 1700 DIAGONAL RD
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314-2848

EXAMINER

FLEMING, FAYE M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3616

DATE MAILED: 09/15/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/671,803

Applicant(s)

HASEBE ET AL.

Examiner

Faye Fleming

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 9/29/03.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1-7, 10 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Tatsuyuki (JP4292239).

Tatsuyuki teaches an airbag for protecting an occupant comprising a left half airbag, a right half airbag, and width constraining means 4 attached to the left half airbag and right half airbag for constraining lateral widths thereof when the left half airbag and the right half airbag are inflated. The width constraining means is formed of a string. The width constraining means includes joining means for directly joining panels for constituting the left half airbag and the right half airbag. The left half airbag and right half airbag have distal ends facing the occupant, the distal ends being separated from each other so that a space is formed between the distal ends facing the occupant when the left half airbag and the right half airbag are inflated. The left half airbag is connected to the right half airbag at midsections thereof in a direction that the left half airbag and the right half airbag deploy. Tatsuyuki teaches vertical width constraining means 9. The left half airbag and the right half airbag includes an inclined upper portion so that the one of the left half airbag and the right half airbag

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does not contact an interior of a vehicle when the left half airbag and the right half airbag are inflated. Tatsuyuki teaches a base communicating with the left and right half airbags, the left and right half airbag separately projecting outwardly from the base. Tatsuyuki teaches inflator (see abstract).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tatsuyuki (JP4292239) in view of Bohn, et al (6,595,549).

Tatsuyuki teaches the claimed invention except for a portion of the airbag thickness gradually decreasing upwardly when inflated. Bohn teaches an airbag wherein the airbag thickness gradually decreases upwardly, as shown in the figures. Based on the teachings of Bohn, it would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to modify the airbag of Tatsuyuki to gradually decrease upwardly when inflated to control deployment of the airbag during a vehicle collision.

5. Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable Tatsuyuki (JP4292239).

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With respect to the spaced between the left and right half airbags, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the distal ends of the left and right half airbags spaced by a distance between 150 and 350 mm when the airbags are deployed, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art.

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The references cited discloses some features in common with the present invention.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Faye Fleming whose telephone number is (703) 305-0209. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (9:00-5:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul Dickson can be reached on (703) 308-2089. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Faye Fleming
Examiner
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03/04

fmf